STABLE GROWTH WITH HURCO MILLING MACHINES

S&S Industrial Service GmbH in Braunschweig specializes in the production and stocking of vendor parts for the automotive industry. After only five years on the market – three of them with its own production – the company already has more than 180 customers. The recipe for success from the point of view of the two owners Sven Werner and Steffen Meyer: excellent industry know-how plus a precisely timed product concept – both combined with the flexibility and cost efficiency of HURCO machining centers.

Originally, everything was planned quite differently. Sven Werner and Steffen Meyer wanted to set up their own trading business for components. But their idea of positioning themselves as a fast and flexible supplier for the automotive industry and mechanical engineering failed because of the dependence on the respective contract manufacturers. So the two entrepreneurs rewrote the concept without further ado and founded S&S Industrial Service GmbH, which offers both the manufacture of components and call-off stock. As a former plant manager in machining technology, Werner, a trained tool mechanic, had the necessary technical knowledge and his partner Meyer, as a business economist, took over the commercial part.

A wide range of services from HURCO

The S&S portfolio comprises more than 2,500 items. These include parts manufactured according to DIN, such as simple screws and nuts, as well as assembled subassemblies for the

production lines of VW, Audi and Porsche. Werner describes: “Our offer ranges from single part production in CNC turning or CNC milling to the production of small series. In addition, there is free-form milling according to models as well as the assembly of smaller devices and systems.” This explains why versatile machining gantries are important to the entrepreneur. Currently, there are two 3-axis and one 5-axis milling machine from HURCO in the Braunschweig production hall.

With the TMX 8 MYi high-performance turning center, the VMX 30 Ui 5-axis machine with integrated rotary swivel table and the VMX 24 i workhorses, which feature a maximum table load of up to 1,360 kilograms, they cover different key performance areas. All components are prefabricated on the 3-axis machines in the first step. They are then finished on the 5-axis machine in the last two setups, Werner explains.

Crucial: The Max 5 CNC control

“Of course, I looked at other machines before buying our first HURCO. But the Max 5 CNC control is simply the best on the market from my point of view,” says Managing Director Werner, explaining his decision in favor of the German machine tool builder, adding, “I also knew the HURCO company very well from my old employment, as well as the service.” For the managing director, the uncomplicated and intuitive operability of the dialog-oriented WinMax control system plays a major role in his company’s success, as it enables him and his team to respond quickly and flexibly to customer requirements. Short delivery times are a relevant competitive advantage for S&S Industrial Service.

When setting up the machine park, the two managing directors decided on a uniform control technology so that the employees can change their workplace flexibly at any time. “In addition, the HURCO machines are priced in the middle range and fit perfectly into our budget,” adds Steffen Meyer.

Punctual delivery and reliable quality

In addition to “just in time” production, S&S stocks standardized components for its customers, primarily suppliers to the automotive industry. A continuously optimized inventory management system ensures that S&S has the 150 parts most in demand in stock and can manufacture the others at short notice from its catalog of more than 1,000 items. This means that it is more economical for the component manufacturers to obtain the individual parts they need quickly from S&S Industrial Service than to produce them themselves. As a reliable supply partner and with consistently good product quality, the service provider has made it into the specifications of major automotive manufacturers.

Shorter machining times for trochoidal milling

For Managing Director Werner, the HURCO turning and milling machines together with the Max

5 control system are exactly the right equipment for his young, dynamic team in production. The average age of the team is a good 25 years. He explains: “Thanks to the dialog concept of WinMax, employees with less professional experience are optimally introduced to the individual steps of programming and can thus realize components independently in a short time. For example, it is sufficient for the user to roughly specify the contour as well as the length and width of the workpiece, and the program calculates the missing data. In addition, there is automatic error checking and a second screen on which the work process can be followed on the graphic model. This is all very convenient. I find the three-day training that HURCO offers on this absolutely sufficient.”

At S&S, the additional options offered by HURCO, such as the transfer of CAM/CAD programming via DXF format directly into the control system and adaptive trochoidal milling, are also regularly used. Werner: “We use trochoidal milling for many components and especially for harder materials because it saves us time and, due to the relatively gentle cutting process, is also gentler on the tools. In addition, this means noticeably less tool wear. This is another economic aspect, because the cost of good tools is not insignificant.”

A good ear helps during machining

Right now, angle elements for fixture construction are being manufactured in the Braunschweig halls from 16-Mn Cr-5 case-hardened steel and S355 structural steel, a standard component in the portfolio. Sven Werner can leave such tasks entirely to his employees. Only sometimes does he stand next to the machine. He explains: “In trochoidal milling, the tool is used over the entire cutting edge length. So I have a considerable mechanical and thermal load and therefore have to be careful how I apply the machining. Driving into the workpiece at full cut at top speed doesn’t work.” For him, a cutting machine operator himself, it is important that employees know what is happening on the machine, for example how the drill reacts and what forces are applied to the tool and spindle. It goes without saying that comprehensive knowledge of materials is also part of the job. “Good cutting machine operators have a special talent: they can hear whether the work process is working or whether a problem is developing. The mix of training and experience hones that skill. I can train people, I can show them everything but it also takes the talent to use your ear,” says the technical manager.

Meyer adds, “The parts are getting more complex. There is hardly any pure turning or milling anymore; the machining operations are integrated. The required manufacturing tolerances are

also becoming more demanding. We produce with a margin of one to two hundredths. Below that, it is no longer possible to work sensibly mechanically." Both entrepreneurs agree that S&S Industrial Service is well positioned for the future. Werner: "Our employees are very young. This gives us the opportunity to further develop S&S in line with the new challenges. And with HURCO, we have a holistic supplier and competent partner at our side."

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